

What Can You Do?

1. Arrange for public and organizational meetings on amnesty. Printed material, speakers and media resources are available at the Minnesotans for Amnesty headquarters.
2. Identify the families of war resisters in your community and make your support known.
3. Urge your local community groups, churches, organizations, legislative bodies, and the like to adopt resolutions in support of universal, unconditional amnesty, and send these to the press, your representatives, the President, and Minnesotans for Amnesty.
4. Write personal letters to your local newspaper, state and federal representatives.

Get involved with and send a donation to the state-wide Minnesotans for Amnesty Campaign.

Coordinated by:

Minn. Clergy & Laity Concerned
122 W. Franklin Ave.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55404
(612) 871-8033

AMNESTY

Questions & Answers



MINNESOTANS for AMNESTY

Minnesota Clergy & Laity Concerned
122 W. Franklin Ave.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55404
(612) 871-8033

Why Amnesty?

Our nation is in need of a healing act. The divisions caused by the longest and most unpopular war in our history are still with us. The American people voted for a promised peace in three different presidential elections only to see those promises broken. As a result, a whole generation of young people were compelled to choose between their conscience and killing, or being killed in a war many of them considered immoral and illegal. Vindictive persecution of those who resisted will not bring back the dead nor restore the disabled. Such persecutions will only remind us of how far we have strayed from the principles on which this nation was founded; founded in large part by refugees from involuntary servitude in the armies of other nations.

What Is Amnesty?

Amnesty is the discretionary act of a sovereign state deciding to abstain from prosecuting groups of citizens who may be in conflict with the law for political reasons. Amnesty is the law's "forgetting" (cf. amnesia) of certain acts, in the interest of social justice and reconciliation. It is the law's way of undoing what the law has done. Like pardon, amnesty is not a right but a matter of grace which a government may perform in the interest of society at large. Unlike pardon, amnesty affects not a single person but entire classes of possible law violators, and unlike pardon it does not remit further punishment.

Who Should Get Amnesty?

Minnesotans for Amnesty advocate a universal and unconditional amnesty for draft refusers, deserters, persons convicted by courts-martial for military offenses not punishable under civilian law, veterans with less-than-honorable discharges, and civilian protesters and resisters to the war.

How Many Would It Affect?

Minnesota statistics reveal there are 11,895 men and women who would benefit from an unconditional amnesty. This includes 673 draft resisters, 602 military deserters, 8,460 with less than honorable discharges, 1,880 nonregistrants, and 280 civilian protesters arrested for anti-war activity.

DRAFT REFUSERS: Some 7,400 men have been convicted by the federal courts for draft violations during the Vietnam era. Selective Service has referred to the Department of Justice for prosecution some 39,000 draft violators. There are about 5,700 draft indictments pending. Unknown thousands never registered for the draft and therefore have no present record of delinquency but are subject to prosecution whenever their violations come to the attention of the government. (In June, 1973 the head of Selective Service, Byron V. Pepitone reported that in fiscal '72 about 10% of men turning 18 didn't register for the draft. Two million men turn 18 every year.

DESERTERS: According to the Defense Department there are now over 32,000 deserters "at large" (in exile or underground in U.S.). Many did not